

Interview with Royal Navy Commodore Steve Cleary Deputy Director, Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Center of Excellence

As military forces around the world transform the way they organize, plan, train and fight, Commander, U.S. Second Fleet has established the Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Center of Excellence (CJOS COE) to provide Joint Maritime Operations expertise for partner nations by drawing from more than 50 years of expertise as Commander, NATO Striking Fleet Atlantic. The CJOS COE functions through close liaison and cooperation with Allied Command Transformation, other maritime COEs, NATO joint force commands and numerous national commands.

Royal Navy Commodore Steve Cleary, deputy director of the CJOS COE, talked to CHIPS about 2nd Fleet's role as the Combined Forces Maritime Component Commander in the Trident Warrior 2007 series of experiments conducted March 20-30 off the Virginia coast. Trident Warrior is the primary FORCEnet Sea Trial exercise sponsored by the Naval Network Warfare Command (NETWARCOM) and the Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR).



Royal Navy Commodore Steve Cleary

CDRE Cleary: We are trying to exploit advanced technologies and technology concepts, which hopefully will provide people like me, the warfighters, with information superiority, which means we will be better than our adversaries in the maritime environment. Superior decision-making capability is the entire aim of warfare at the operational level.

CHIPS: What do you hope to achieve for the coalition?

CDRE Cleary: The allies that will be participating in Trident Warrior are: the Canadians from their Regional Joint Operations Center in Halifax, Canada; the 'Brits' in London at Northwood Maritime Fleet Operations Headquarters; NATO at their Maritime Ops Centers in both Northwood and Naples; and America, from the U.S. Joint Forces Command, Joint Experimentation Center in Suffolk, Va., U.S. Sixth Fleet in Naples, U.S. Second Fleet in Norfolk, and the USS Harry S. Truman Strike Group participating at sea.

It is not the biggest coalition of NATO participants, but it is a start, and you have to start somewhere.

I am hoping to achieve a common set of processes and procedures so we can then spread that out further within NATO and further out of NATO. You don't have to be a member of NATO, and it can't be just members of NATO participating in what we are trying to achieve through this — which is maritime situational awareness. It used to be called maritime domain awareness, but the preferred title now — in NATO language — is maritime situational awareness.

If we do get common processes and procedures through the Maritime Headquarters/Maritime Operations Centers, or HQ/MOCs, in America, Canada, Great Britain and NATO proper, we can then force and push that throughout the 26 nations that make up NATO. And then go beyond that. This is a global issue. The sea encompasses so much of our workspace, our environment, that we have got to control it. We have got to control it better than we may have done in the past.

We are very good at maritime military operations in a war-time environment, like the Falkland Islands conflict in 1982 and the first Gulf conflict in 1991. It is that stuff that goes on outside of the military fighting operation that we need to be better at, [and] that's measuring our maritime environment for those

vessels coming out of, for example, the Strait of Gibraltar, the Malaccan Straits or whatever. They've come from somewhere and they are going somewhere. As long as they are going about their business in a normal, decent, peaceful fashion there should be no concern whatsoever. But we know that there are vessels out there carrying bad people, bad equipment and weapons of mass destruction, illegal drugs, and illegal this or that. Those are the people we need to identify and measure and monitor.

That is what we are trying to improve with this MOC headquarters around as much of the world as we can to be better at maritime situational awareness in the maritime environment.

CHIPS: The British have longstanding experience in port safety and maritime dominance. Are you bringing that experience into Trident Warrior even though no British ships are participating?

CDRE Cleary: We will. It is very kind of you to say that we have a lot of experience. I think that we have. That doesn't necessarily mean that we don't still have a great deal to learn. The enemy continues to evolve and adapt. We must continually evolve ourselves to outpace them. We must ensure freedom on the seas and littorals, while denying the enemy the same. We must lean on our collective depth of experience, both successes and failures, but we must embrace innovation as well.

When were we good? Were we good at the Battle of Trafalgar when we came across the combined French and Spanish? Yes, we were. Are we good at the moment at maritime situational awareness? That's a new environment. We are now in a terrorist environment through asymmetric warfare, and we are not sure what's going on. We face challenges never before imagined. We need to be better at that, and I think we are getting better at it.

Today's maritime threats are elusive — enjoying sanctuary in their globalized, non-nation state existence. Traditional sorts of sea power such as 'gunboat' diplomacy and deterrence have little effect. Our only hope is for ourselves to coordinate globally.

A problem from Naples is not just a threat to Italy. A problem from Toulon is not just a threat to France. Today, there is simply no such thing as a regional threat — all threats are in some way global. The more we link into other people, often people we traditionally would not have linked into, the better we will be able

to identify such threats, understand their intent, and then determine how to respond.

If a threat comes out of the Atlantic and then goes through the Strait of Gibraltar, and it is somebody we have absolutely identified as a critical contact of interest for whatever reason, we need to make sure that information is passed into the Mediterranean. Then we go back to that process of what we do about it. Tail it? Monitor and board? Apprehend?

The processes we have to work out — and soon — go beyond information sharing. These are the processes and procedures that we have to establish. If it [a threat] pops up in your area, what do you do? If it pops up 300 miles off the East Coast of America, what do we do?

CHIPS: Is there any one technology or phase of the experiments that you are particularly interested in?

CDRE Cleary: It is mainly the common processes. We are using a number of technologies for passing information, such as BRITE, NATO's developing collaborative capability for maritime operations, awareness and information sharing. There are a number of other technological solutions we are experimenting with throughout NETWARCOM and SPAWAR.

There are about 200 objectives out of about 80 technology experiments overall in this experimental exercise that we are trying to achieve. Mine is only one part of it. There are numerous other experiments delivering objectives that are being worked here. There is an awful lot going on.

Here in NETWARCOM and SPAWAR, people like Brad Poeltler [TW07 deputy director] are working it everyday — all sorts of technological solutions to improve and give people like me, the warfighting person at sea, decision superiority over our adversaries. That is the whole aim of this business.

CHIPS: How would local and regional law enforcement and other agency people respond and share information with the Navy?

CDRE Cleary: That is a good point. I remember through Hurricane Katrina some well-advertised shortcomings that came across during the hurricane: federal, state and the local coordination and maritime and land coordination. It is not just about maritime on maritime or maritime with air support and maritime with land — it's about interagency business. This stuff that is at sea has come from land somewhere, and this stuff that is at sea is going to land somewhere.

We can only do so much — and if we don't have that interagency linkage set up — we will fail. It will get so far — and then it will stop — and we will lose it. If it comes close to the U.S. Eastern Seaboard, the U.S. Coast Guard will have responsibility.

It couldn't be more true, when you mentioned that bit about the interagency and coordination. I have seen it go not so well. I believe there were some coordination issues that came out in Hurricane Katrina that we need to be better at. That is not a criticism of this country but an observation from my participation in Katrina.

I don't know if you intend involving yourselves during Trident Warrior itself. If you do, I'll be in Suffolk at the Joint Warfare Center throughout the entire period at the U.S. Joint Forces headquarters. This is another example of interagency cooperation.

Royal Navy Commodore Steve Cleary, deputy director of the Combined Joint Operations from the Sea Center of Excellence, talks to members of the media about the importance of Trident Warrior to coalition partners just before Trident Warrior execution March 15, 2007, aboard Naval Station Norfolk in the SPAWAR Systems Center Charleston Tidewater Node of the FORCENet Composeable Environment.



Trident Warrior happens to have numerous threads that will attempt to answer your question. We have several interagency objectives within the Truman Strike Group and facilities ashore, and we are even working with nongovernment organizations, such as the World Health Organization, to better develop technologies and processes to ensure they are included as well.

People that lack the ability to discuss issues with the media have missed the interagency bit. I have done it on a number of occasions in my career, and we have to make sure that we get that message quite clear and correct.

A lot of military people almost feel afraid of the media and media coverage. I don't know why because this is your opportunity to get them on your side and to declare and demonstrate and get their support so it gets publicized. You send the message and more people see the message and read the message. That's my personal point.

CHIPS: How are the experiments going? Are there any surprises or early successes or disappointments?

CDRE Cleary: Trident Warrior has been a tremendous success, though there have been a few disappointments here and there. Although analysis is ongoing, the 'quick-look' reports have given us a very good sense that we identified many important lessons, in both technologies and processes, that we will be able to implement in short order.

The multinational MOC to MOC coordination and cooperation resulted in an immediate improvement in our ability to work together across the regions, something I hope we are able to institutionalize in doctrine and tactics, techniques and procedures, as soon as possible. Many technologies highlighted significant gains in terms of information sharing and situational awareness.

We are now in the difficult business of analyzing what worked best, in what conditions. Some we will no doubt want to adopt. Some we will want to reject. Some we will identify for continued testing. What we confirmed, without a doubt, is that we can't fight tomorrow's problem with yesterday's tools, methods and ideas.

Go to http://www.secondfleet.navy.mil/files/leadership/dep_dir_csf.html, for a copy of Commodore Cleary's biography.

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